

BHAKTA - BATSLA SREE JAGANNATH DEVA

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INTRODUCTION

All Vedic Scriptures and literatures expresses an unique relation between the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His real devotees. The God Himself said that real devotees do not want to understand except Me. I also do not consider anyone except my real devotees and won't make and maintain a keen relationship with non - devotees, demoniac - minded people and like them ; It may be noted that the relationship between the devotees and the God himself is unconditional and based on the real love to each other. This is why a devotee does not fall down from his devotional life as service to his Lord. Lord as well Krishna also advised Arjuna -

Kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhakta pranashati (Gita 9/31)

His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada remarked on the above verse as Generally a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away. Continuous thinking of the Supreme Lord makes him pure by nature."

Krishna also said to Arjuna:- "Even if one commits most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service. He is to be considered sainty because he is properly situated in his determination."

(Gita 9/30).

The unique relationship between a devotee and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is found in Jagannath's Lila. Some instances are mentioned below very shortly.

Story of GITAGOVINDA KAVYA of Joydeva Goswami, Daughter of a Mali and one Mughal Soldier.

By the grace of Jagannatha Joydev Goswami after completing his Gita - Gobinda Kavya came in Puri. He recited the song of Gita - Govinda everyday for the pleasure of Jagannath. After some days he left Puridham.

One day a daughter of a Mali was singing the song of Gita - Govinda while plucking Begun(a kind of vegetable). Jagannath Deva heard the sweet song and at once He came in the Begun Kheta. After hearing the song for sometime He left the place and came in the Mandir.

In the next day the Pujaris (Pandas) found that the Uttavia of the Lord has been torned in different places. Orissa Raj was informed about the matter and after praying to Jagannath, He narrated all the things. He also advised to bring the daughter of the Mali to serve Him the song of Git Govinda. The girl was brought to Puridham and accordingly she was advised to sing the song of GitGovinda everyday at night before the Lord Jagannath till he sleeps.

Hearing the above fact a Moghal Soldier came in Jagannath Puri and started to sing the same song. But Jagannath Deva was not coming forward to him. The soldier thought that as he is a Yavana, Jagannath did not come to him for hearing the song of GitGovinda. The Supreme Personality of Godhead at once appeared to him to hear his song. The soldier became astonished and lay down on the lotus feet of the Lord. From the above facts, it is clear that there is no bar to worship and serve the Lord in any way.

CANDALA IS SUPERIOR TO A BRAHMANA IF HE IS A DEVOTEE OF THE LORD

Anyone who renders devotional services to the Lord is certainly superior to an ordinary Brahmin. On the other hand, a Brahmin without such quality is certainly inferior to even a dog. This will be revealed from the following story:-

Once upon a time an old devotee by name Sarama lived at a place far - away from the Jannath Puri. She was a candal by caste. At the old age she came to know that anyone who sees the Jagannathdeva on the chariot, he has not to return again in this material world i.e. he/she will be liberated.

Having regard to this news, on good faith the pious old candal women started from her house to Jagannath Puri. After for walking many days she arrived at Bhubaneshwara. But Alas! at that time she was unable to walk anymore. She then think that perhaps because of being a women of lower caste Jagannath Deva do not like to look at her. She was crying. Jagannath Deva, being Almighty came to know the crying as well as sufferings of His old devotee. At once He ordered the Pandas to bring that old devotee in front of Him. The Pandas carried out the order of the Lord. The old devotee now saw her Lord sitting on the chariot. In this way the Lord satisfied the desire of His devotee's.

DEVOTION OF A DEVOTEE IS THE MAIN, NOT ALWAYS THE RELIGIOUS RULES AND REGULATIONS

In many instances it has been seen that Jagannath Deva gives greater emphasis to His devotees choice rather than the prescribed rules and regulations mentioned in the Vedic scriptures. Here, we likely to mention three cases as below:-

(i) Karamabai and her services to Jagannathdeva

A devotee named Karamabai used to give fried - rice everyday to Jagannath Deva at the very early morning so that the Lord get His breakfast at an earlier time. Due to her devotion Jagannath Deva Himself came to her house everyday and take the fried rice.

One day a saint visited Karamabai and advised her to take care of certain norms before serving the Lord. As such Karmabai could not serve the fried rices in due time. As a result Jagannath Deva could not get His breakfast in due time. He returned to the Mandir and advised the Pandas to tell Karamabai to deliver Him the fried rice as before. Karamabai did the same thing hearing and observing the services rendered by the old lady the saint became very fear and he fell down on the feet of the old lady and beg pardon to her.

(ii) PUNISHMENT OF PUNDARIK VIDHANIDHI BY JAGANNATHDEVA

Pundarik Vidhanidhi was a close associate of Mahaprabhu. Once he came to Nilachala. One day while visiting the Mandir he saw that the Pandas were wearing the Jagannathdeva, Baladeva and Subhadra Maharani unwashed clothes which, at that time was considered as a sinful activity. He criticises such practice of the Pandas.

At night when Vidhanidhi was sleeping in a room Jagannathdeva arrived and after beating him said what ever my devotees presents me I take those happily. Who are you to make comments on their services?. Further my place is out of any rules and regulations. As a result Viddhani dhi becomes happy.

(ii) Punishment of Sri Ramanuja Acarya

Ramanuja Acarya was the famous preacher and leader of the Sri - Sampradaya Vaisnavas. At one time he came to visit Jagannath Puri and saw that the services rendered to the Lord is not done on the basis of the prescribed rules mentioned in the Vedaic Scriptures. He could convince the then Raja Chowrangadeva to change the rules. Ramanuja told the King that he

would present on a date fixed by him to introduce the new rules for worshiping the Lord. The devotees of the Lord prayed to Him not to change the old rules of worshiping Him. The Lord then ordered the Garuadeva to pick up the Ramanuja and place him in a very distant place so that he cannot present on the fixed date. On the fixed date, the King was present but he could not find Ramanuja. On searching it was later on found Ramanuja in Kurmakshetra in the Southern India.

KRIPA TO DEVOTEE MADHAVDAS

Madhavdas was a pure devotee of Jagannathdeva. He left his relatives, own village and all things and came in Nilachal and stay on the sea - beach. He always think of Jagannathdeva worship always through his mind and talk to others about the mercy of Jagannathdeva. Two examples are given below how Jagannathdeva showed His mercy on Madhav Das.

(I) Madhava Das did not want any thing from anyone. Once no one gave him anything for three consecutive days. Jagannathdeva, after knowing this sent His own Prasad through Laxmi - Devi. Madhava Das became very grateful to the Lord and took His Prasada. Then after he washed the gold plate and kept the same on the sand of the beach.

In the morning when the Pandas did not found the gold plate of the Lord they were searching the same and at one time found the same near Madhava Das. Thinking Him as a thief they brought him in the Mandir and torture him much. Madhav Das remembered the Lord. The Lord then told the Pandas that He Himself sent Prasad to His devotee through Laxmidevi. Hearing this the Pandas freed Madhava Das and beg to him for pardon them.

(ii) Madhav - Das has a small diety of Jagannathdeva with him. Very often he looked at the diety in full attention. At that time he usually became senseless. At one winter night he became senseless in the same way. Due to very coldness his body was shranked Jagannathdeva then covered his body with His Sala (a warm cloth).

SUDDEN FALLEN DEVOTEES ALSO GET THE MERCY OF JAGANNATHDEVA

The Lord declared "Even if one commits the abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional services he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination" (Gita 9/30). His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada in his purport on this verse commented :- Sometimes, however it may be seen that a person in Krishna consciousness commits some act which may be taken as most abominable socially or politically. But such a temporary fall - down does not disqualify him. In the Srimad Bhagvatam it is stated that if a person falls down but is wholeheartedly engaged in the transcendental services of the Supreme Lord, the Lord being situated with in his heart, purifies him and excuses him from the abomination". Here is an example, Balaramdas was a devotee of the Lord Jagannath who always think of the Lord, worship Him in mind and rember unto to the Lotus feet of the Lord. But he used to go to prostitute sometimes. In one Rath - Yatra due to mistake he had gone to a prostitute. But the Lady reminded him of the Jagannathdeva's Rath - Yatra and charged him by saying that if not coming to her Balaram Das could join the Ratha Yatra he could have the mercy of the Lord.

Hearing the above Balaram Das at once reached the place of the Ratha - Yatra and was about to take active

part. But other devotees drove him out. He then went to the sea - beach and draw a chariot of Jagannatha with the help of sand. Then he shouted "Joy - Jagannath" and drive the chariot mentally.

Jagannathdeva arrived on his Ratha and as a result the wooden Rath of Jagannatha stand-still. None, and even the elephants could not drive the chariot. The King hearing this prayed to the Lord. The Lord then ordered to bring His keen devotee Balaram from the sea - beach and let him drive the Ratha.

JAGANNATHDEVA BEARS THE BURDEN OF HIS DEVOTEE

In Bhagavad Gita Krishna has said:- "Those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form - to them I carry what they lack and I preserve what they have. (Gita 9/22)

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in his purport on this verse remarked :- "One who is unable to live for a moment without Krishna consciousness cannot but think of Krishna twenty - four hours a day being engaged in devotional service by hearing, chanting, remembering, offering prayers, worshiping, servicing the lotus feet of the Lord, rendering other services, cultivating friendship and surrendering fully to the Lord... Such devotees undoubtedly approaches the Lord without difficulty. This is called Yoga. By the mercy of the Lord such a devotee never comes back to the material condition of life. The Lord helps the devotee to achieve Krishna Consciousness by Yoga, and when he becomes fully Krishna Conscious the Lord protects him from falling down to a miserable conditioned life."(Gita 4/23)

From this verse it is understood that in times of necessity the Lord (Jagannathdeva) bear even the necessary food stuffs of the devotees. This was happened in case of a devotee named Arjun Misra who is known as Gita Panda. He used to read Gita everyday and one day while reading he saw the words "bayam maham" and he cut the words thinking that why the Lord will bear the livelihood of a devotee?. One day this Brahmin went for begging for his livelihood, But could collect nothing.

The Lord with His Elder Brother Baladev brought a lot a things for his family in his absence. Returning home he came to know from his wife that two children have brought these and then and then he understood that the Lord with his brother came to his house with these food stuffs so that they do not suffer from starvation. At once he picked up the Gita and corrected the verse accordingly.

Such was the mercy of Jagannathdeva on His devotees.